



Statement of the President of the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation, Micheline Calmy-Rey, to the FIG Congress, November 2022

Mr President Watanabe,
Mr Secretary General,
Dear Vice Presidents,
Dear Delegates,

It is my sincere pleasure to report to you once again on the activities of the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation. This year marks the Foundation's first full quadrennium of operation. We have continued to build on our strengths by protecting and enforcing the principles of safety, fairness, equality, and justice while seeking to engage, serve and support all actors across the gymnastics ecosystem.

During this initial start-up phase, we have learned much more about numerous cases of historical and present-day abuse prevalent in the sport across all disciplines at the local and national levels in several countries. We have observed and investigated systemic and cultural challenges in harmful and controlling behaviours demonstrated across the sport, ultimately creating an atmosphere of control, fear, mistrust, and animosity.

As President of the Foundation, my fellow Council members and I, with our committed management team, wholeheartedly acknowledge these realities and challenges, whether they are real or may be perceived. In doing so, we seek to demonstrate a need for change and evolution across the ecosystem. The Council is committed to taking the necessary actions to improve and evolve the sport of gymnastics by supporting the FIG, National Gymnastics Federations, Continental Unions and all individual and institutional actors associated with the sport.

We accept our responsibility to act with absolute professionalism, independence, and impartiality in preventing and remediating harm and addressing unethical behaviours brought to our attention. We will continue to develop the capacities and capabilities to remain fit for purpose in our service and support of all of you.



The Foundation's staff continues to be composed of three highly dedicated part-time team members, supported by a team of interns, external specialists, and legal experts for specific investigations and hearings.

This year, we have continued to be active in our growing adjudication and disciplinary work. We anticipate over 50 new cases in 2022, 45 of which are currently open, representing a 25% increase in cases from last year. Most of these cases are related to safeguarding, though we have also seen increases in casework related to compliance matters. Often, the safeguarding cases reported to us reflect an issue with national safeguarding mechanisms. In these cases we strive to use the concrete cases before us to find systemic solutions. We expect the case workload to increase and, therefore, the need for greater capacity in the immediate and longer term as greater trust, legitimacy and awareness grows around the Foundation.

Work in the area of "safe sports" has continued to grow in prominence across the global sports industry and is more prominent and popular than ever with the emergence of educational programmes, seminars and calls for more investigations, greater transparency in decision making and system of accountability.

To this end, the Foundation has closely engaged with the FIG Safeguarding Working Group and the newly established FIG Safeguarding Commission under the leadership of President Watanabe and chaired by Donatella Sacchi. Our ongoing engagement with the FIG safeguarding entities is centered on aligning our collective educational priorities and capabilities, sharing knowledge, and nurturing a platform for leadership development and safer working culture across the ecosystem. As we move forward, harm prevention (which includes safeguarding and other ethical standards) forms the bedrock of good governance systems, growth potential and positive impact across all gymnastics disciplines. Ultimately and however the FIG provides educational programming and support to the gymnastics family, all nations must commit and adhere to fundamental standards and make transformational investments in time, energy and expertise to respect, protect and promote safe gymnastics. This was emphasized as recently as last week at the Safe Sport Journey Symposium hosted by British Gymnastics and the FIG in Liverpool at the 2022 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, where the Foundation participated.

This year we have made significant strides to engage with the diverse actors across the gymnastics ecosystem, which has given us a greater perspective on who and how we best support and serve through the Foundation's mandate and the future needs of the



sport. Our ecosystem approach, specific to gymnastics, has been inspired by a similar exercise conducted by the Centre for Sport and Human Rights in 2021 for the global sports industry.

We believe this is an innovative and compelling way of demonstrating our commitment to individuals and institutions, but most importantly this diagram both recognizes and emphasizes the prominence of “gymnasts” and the roles of other individuals with their diverse characteristics that need to be considered as we create a safe, thriving and impactful sport of gymnastics.

We are continuing to pay close attention to national and continental efforts to improve harm prevention processes and look forward to working with the FIG and each of your federations on strengthening governance systems, compliance mechanisms and the collective capability to better protect people, enforce rules, regulations and policies, while evolving the capacity to develop and grow a culture of mutual respect through action and impact.

On behalf of the Foundation Council, I would like to again thank you for your time and for the trust that you place in us. We are all custodians here – given the privilege to serve and support gymnasts and protect the sanctity of gymnastics with safety and integrity.

I will now pass on to Alex McLin, GEF Director, who will provide more details on the last year’s activities.